

Message Text

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ORIGIN MCT-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 USIE-00

INR-07 SY-05 L-03 EB-07 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CCO-00

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M:WEGAN (SUBS)

S/S-O:AOTTO

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O P 132331Z SEP 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL MONTREAL IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 226287 TOSEC 270029

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON TWA HIJACKING

1. FOLLOWING IS GUIDANCE ON TWA HIJACKING PREPARED FOR
SEPTEMBER 13 PRESS BRIEFING. TEXT OF BRIEFING IS BEING
PROVIDED SEPTEL.

2. QUOTE:

Q. WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THE HIJACKING BY CROATIAN
NATIONALISTS?

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A. WE UNEQUIVOCALLY CONDEMN THIS HIJACKING AND ANY OTHER

SUCH VIOLENT ACT WHICH ENDANGERS THE LIVES OF INNOCENT PERSONS.

Q. WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEW OF THE HIJACKERS' APPEAL FOR AN INDEPENDENT CROATIAN STATE?

A. WE HAVE REPEATEDLY MADE KNOWN AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS AND WE REAFFIRM TODAY THE STEADFAST INTEREST AND SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF YUGOSLAVIA.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE REPORTED YUGOSLAV CHARGE THAT CERTAIN REACTIONARY CIRCLES IN THE U.S. ARE PARTICIPATING IN A CAMPAIGN AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA?

A. IF THAT REPORT IS ACCURATE AND IF IT IS MEANT TO INCLUDE THE USG, IT IS UTTER NONSENSE.

Q. WHAT ABOUT REPORTED YUGOSLAV ACCUSATIONS THAT THE USG IS NOT VIGOROUSLY PURSUING ANTI-YUGOSLAV TERRORISTS IN THE U.S.

A. OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ARE INTENSIVELY PURSUING THEIR INVESTIGATION OF SUCH INCIDENTS AS THE BOMBING LAST JUNE OF THE YUGOSLAV EMBASSY. WE ARE PROVIDING THE FULLEST POSSIBLE PROTECTION TO YUGOSLAV DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR ESTABLISHMENTS AND PERSONAL.

Q. HAVE THE INVESTIGATIONS TURNED UP ANY LEADS?

A. I CANNOT COMMENT FURTHER ON LEGAL ACTIONS THAT ARE IN PROCESS.

Q. DID THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT DELIVER A STRONG PROTEST TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON SEPTEMBER 11, AS REPORTED FROM BELGRADE PRESS SOURCES? IF SO, WHAT WAS THE U.S. RESPONSE?

A. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR US TO REVEAL THE NATURE OF THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON THIS MATTER. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOWEVER, I CAN SAY THAT WE FIND NO GROUNDS FOR COMPLAINT BY THE YUGOSLAVS WITH RESPECT TO USG ACTIONS ON THIS MATTER. THE HOSTAGES HAVE BEEN RELEASED UNHARMED AND THE HIJACKERS ARE IN THE CUSTODY OF U.S. AUTHORITIES AND WILL BE DEALT WITH UNDER RELEVANT U.S. LAW.

Q. DID THE US BEND ITS "NO-CONCESSIONS" POLICY TO EFFECT THE SAFE RELEASE OF THE TWA HIJACKERS?

A. ABSOLUTELY NOT. IN THE FIRST PLACE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW AND CUSTOM, THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH THE HIJACKERS RESTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT MADE NO CONCESSIONS TO THE HIJACKERS, NOR DID WE.

Q. DIDN'T THE DROPPING OF PAMPHLETS OVER US CITIES CONSTITUTE A CONCESSION TO THE TERRORISTS' DEMANDS?

A. THE DECISION TO DROP THE PAMPHLETS WAS MADE BY TWA AND THE DROPS THEMSELVES WERE ACCOMPLISHED BY TWA PLANES

AND PILOTS.

Q. DID THIS VIOLATE US POLICY?

A. THE DROPS WERE NOT IN VIOLATION OF US AVIATION REGULATIONS.

Q. DID THE US SANCTION THE PUBLICATION OF THE TERRORISTS' PRO-CROATIAN MANIFESTO IN VARIOUS US NEWSPAPERS?

A. NEITHER THE TASK FORCE DEALING WITH THE INCIDENT NOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT ACTING ALONE SANCTIONED PUBLICATION.

Q. WELL, WHAT ABOUT THE FBI'S DECISION TO RELEASE THE HIJACKERS' PRO-CROATIAN MANIFESTO TO THE PRESS. WASN'T THAT A CONCESSION?

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A. I SUGGEST YOU TAKE THIS QUESTION UP WITH THE FBI.

Q. WHAT ABOUT AMBASSADOR RUSH'S MEETING WITH THE HIJACKERS? DIDN'T THAT VIOLATE THE USG'S "NO NEGOTIATION" POLICY?

A. THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN OUR ANTI-TERRORISM POLICIES. IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE CLEAR THAT OUR SO-CALLED NO-CONCESSIONS POLICY DOES NOT RULE OUT DISCUSSIONS WITH ABDUCTORS. HOWEVER, SUCH DISCUSSIONS ARE STRICTLY CONFINED TO SUCH MATTERS AS DETERMINING THE WELL-BEING OF THE HOSTAGES AND REQUESTING, ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, THE UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES INVOLVED. IN SUCH SITUATIONS, AMERICAN AMBASSADORS ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS OF ANY KIND. AMBASSADOR RUSH WAS OPERAT-

ING IN FULL COGNIZANCE OF OUR POLICY AND HE IN NO WAY VIOLATED THESE STANDARD INSTRUCTIONS. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT WAS THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WHICH SET THE CONDITIONS FOR THE SURRENDER OF THE HIJACKERS, TOOK THEM INTO CUSTODY AFTER THEIR SURRENDER, AND PROMPTLY RETURNED THEM TO US CUSTODY SO THAT THEY MAY STAND TRIAL.

Q. WHO RAN THE USG'S REACTION TO THIS INCIDENT?

A. THE DEPARTMENT'S OF STATE AND TRANSPORTATION TOOK THE LEAD IN COORDINATING OUR GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THIS INCIDENT DRAWING ON THE RESOURCES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, STATE, JUSTICE, FBI AND INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY. THESE AGENCIES FORMED A TASK FORCE. WE WERE, OF COURSE, IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE WHITE HOUSE.

Q. WAS THE SECRETARY OF STATE DIRECTLY INVOLVED?

A. THE SECRETARY WAS INVOLVED, AS WAS SECRETARY COLEMAN.

Q. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? HOW WILL THE CASE BE PROSECUTED?

A. I WILL HAVE TO REFER YOU TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS TO ALL CONCERNED THAT WE FULLY ANTICIPATE THAT THE PERSONS INVOLVED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS CASE WILL BE TRIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RELEVANT U.S. LAW. END QUOTE

3. GUIDANCE WAS CLEARED BY WHITE HOUSE, TRANSPORTATION, FBI AND JUSTICE. ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Document Unique ID: 00
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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